

## cabernet nostalgia

already she knows all my stories,  
the one about the friend who taught me to like liverwurst,  
every battle with my mother or my former wives,  
the precise athletic origin  
of each of my lingering aches and pains.  
i usually start reminiscing  
just about the second sip of the second glass  
of the first bottle of wine before dinner.  
i get two sentences out "... you know,  
i knew this guy once used to eat a whole package  
of liverwurst with a whole cut-up onion  
on crackers each night before dinner ... and that  
was when he was on a diet!" and she'll say,  
"wasn't that your lawyer?"  
and i'll say, "oh, yeah, i guess i told you that one,"  
and she says, "you've told me fifteen times;  
you've told them all;  
i know them all by heart."

i'm not forty yet.  
if my liver holds out  
and we stay together,  
can you imagine how sick she's going to be  
of that liverwurst story  
by the time we're seventy?

## my brother

i never had a brother.  
i can remember at one time  
wishing that i had one,  
especially a younger one,  
but i guess my parents knew  
they really didn't have the income  
for another kid.  
since i wasn't much of a fighter,  
there were plenty of times growing up  
that i could have used an older brother,  
unless, i suppose, he turned out not to be much  
of a fighter also,  
in which case we would have hated in each other  
the image of our own unmanliness.

i've had a lot of chances to observe large families,  
even to some extent to be a part of them,



and it's scary and comforting and warm and complicated  
the way they bicker with each other,  
but will close ranks the instant an enemy,  
personal or impersonal, should threaten.

you have to share your life, though, with a sibling.  
not just attention and support and time,  
but most of all importance.  
your self-importance is never absolute.  
i guess you can see what being an only child does to you,  
because i'm glad now that i never had a brother.

i do belong to the American Federation of Labor!

i'm sitting in the tavern  
with some of my fellow sports fans,  
all of whom are laborers,  
and someone complains that there's nothing  
to bet on in the spring  
(except for suckering an occasional greenhorn  
into a wager on the superstars competition)

and i say, without thinking, "at least it's a good time  
to get a little work done,"

and Old Jim snorts, "work! you've never done  
an honest day's work, Locklin, in your goddamn life!"

which isn't the literal truth,  
but, as the guffaws chorus and swell,  
i decide this is neither the time nor place  
to discourse upon  
the spiritual travail of the artist.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA

WR: 9, 21, 27/28, 31ss, 33, 35,  
37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47,  
50ss, 53, 56, 60, 61, 64ss, 67cb,  
70, 72, 73, 74, 76ss, 77, 78, 80